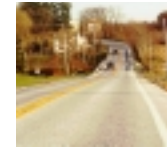




## National Road in Maryland



### *Poplar Springs: Maintaining a Rural Village Atmosphere*

*Poplar Springs, located 27 miles west of Baltimore’s City Hall as noted on an historic mile marker, was a stopover town for travellers on the National Pike.*

The village is nestled in the rolling farmland of western Howard County. The springs of Poplar Springs watered thirsty travelers, horses, and livestock. While the Gatekeeper’s House upon Lemmon’s Hill still stands and the farm which sold milk to passersby has been preserved by agricultural easement, the area is facing strong pressures to develop. Some farmland has already been converted into small subdivisions, tending to blur distinctions between this village and typical suburban landscapes. The increased residential development both here and elsewhere along the Historic National Road Scenic Byway corridor has resulted in more traffic on the road, which travels at higher speeds. Residents are concerned about preserving the high quality of life along the road before it is too late.

The enclosed plan builds on suggestions and concerns of local residents and promotes ways to **enhance driver awareness of the village** while **signaling the necessity to slow down**. A key element of this is **making the road look and feel more narrow** and creating **“pinch points”** at transition zones. **Rumble strips** have been suggested by residents to provide an audible warning. **New street trees**, planted at decreasing intervals, will warn drivers that they are approaching a settled area. The proposed plan marks the location of additional **welcome signs**, a **separated pedestrian path** for the safety of joggers and walkers, and the **recreation of one of the original springhouses** of Poplar Springs — longtime residents have drawn-up plans based on **personal recollections** of the structure.

To help maintain the **rural village atmosphere**, **infill on vacant land within the village center** is also encouraged. **Management strategies** for conserving farmland have been explored further in the Corridor Partnership Plan.



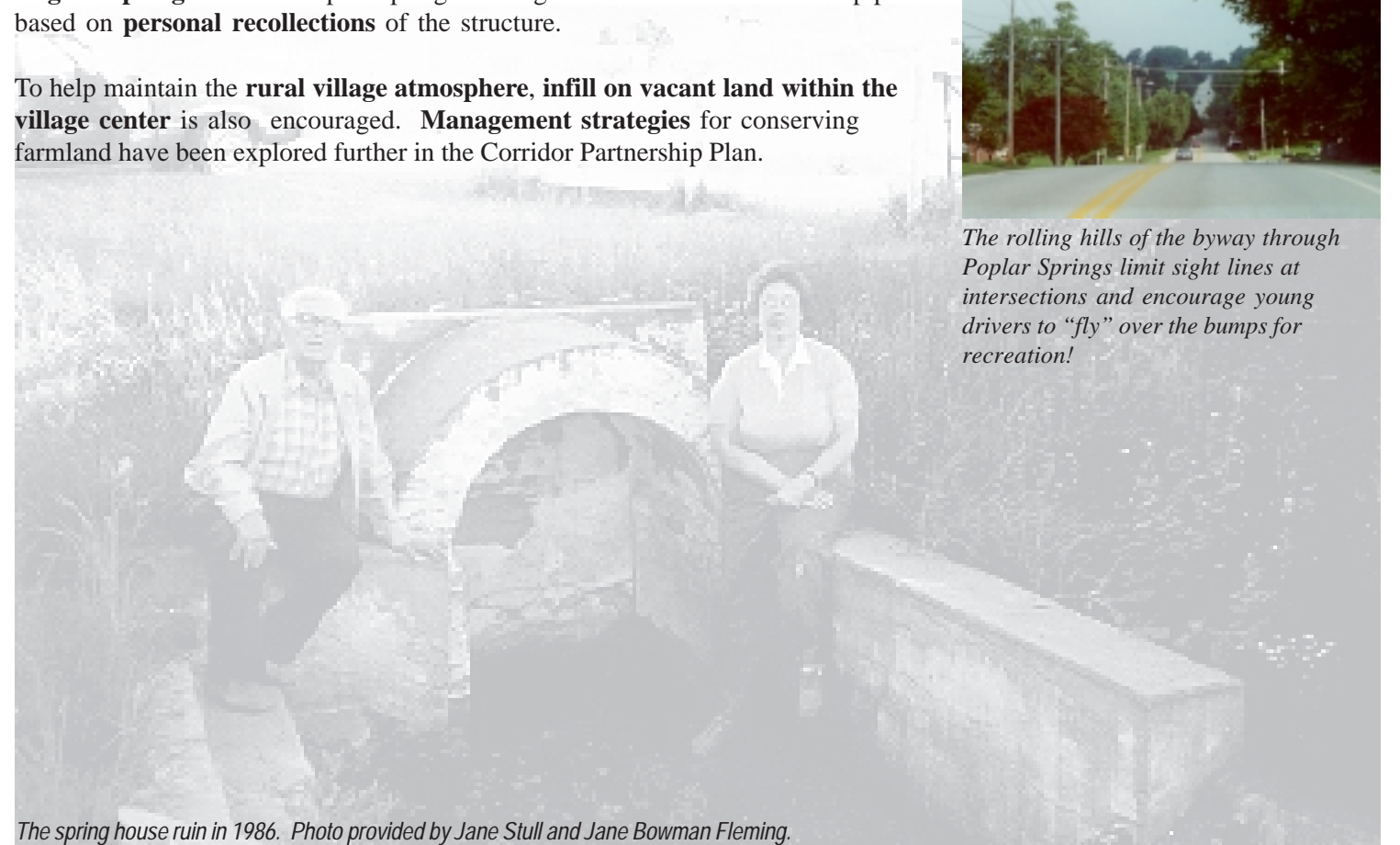
*North “entrance” to Poplar Springs. Surrounding farmland is facing pressures to develop.*



*View from the Historic National Road Scenic Byway facing east, towards the village center.*



*The rolling hills of the byway through Poplar Springs limit sight lines at intersections and encourage young drivers to “fly” over the bumps for recreation!*



*The spring house ruin in 1986. Photo provided by Jane Stull and Jane Bowman Fleming.*





**1** View east of Frederick Road at intersection with West Watersville Road.



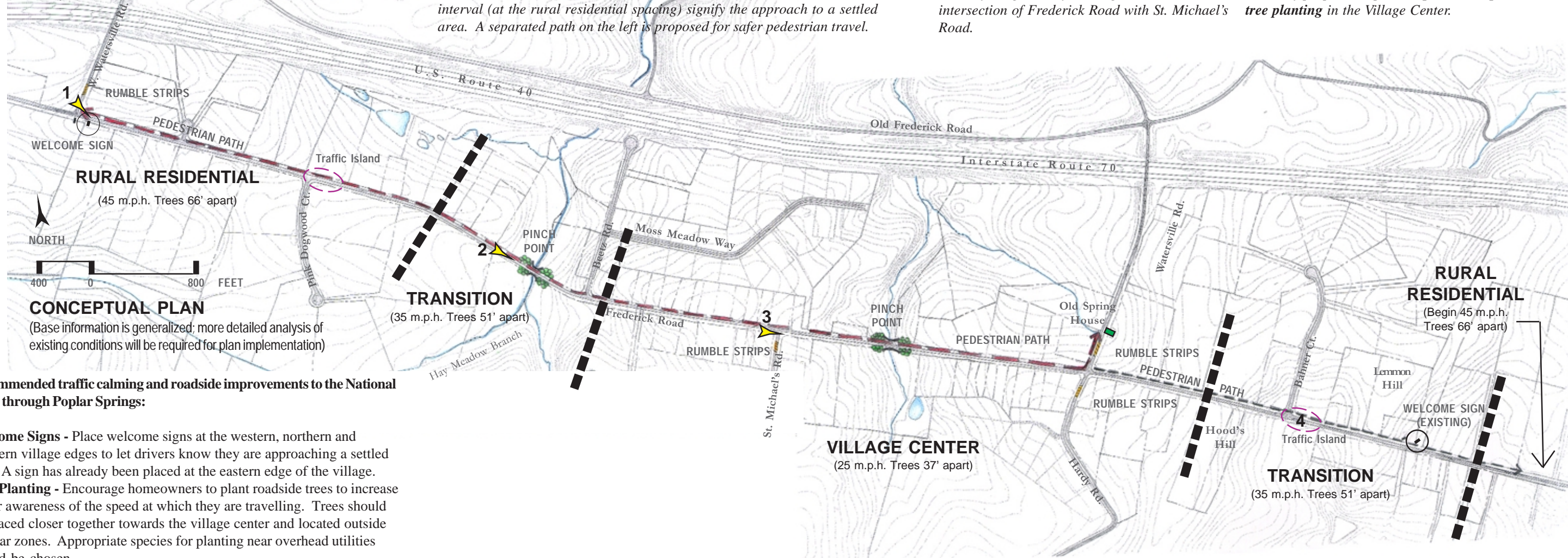
Sketch of proposed **welcome sign** location and trees planted at a regular interval (at the rural residential spacing) signify the approach to a settled area. A separated path on the left is proposed for safer pedestrian travel.



**2** Photo (facing east) of existing conditions at the intersection of Frederick Road with St. Michael's Road.



Sketch of proposed separated **pedestrian path** and **tree planting** in the Village Center.



#### Recommended traffic calming and roadside improvements to the National Road through Poplar Springs:

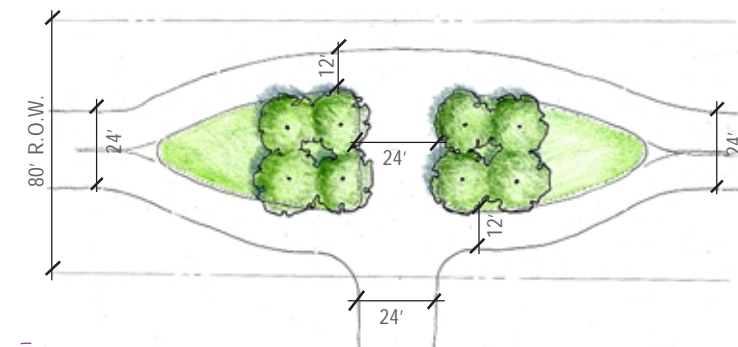
- Welcome Signs** - Place welcome signs at the western, northern and southern village edges to let drivers know they are approaching a settled area. A sign has already been placed at the eastern edge of the village.
- Tree Planting** - Encourage homeowners to plant roadside trees to increase driver awareness of the speed at which they are travelling. Trees should be spaced closer together towards the village center and located outside of clear zones. Appropriate species for planting near overhead utilities should be chosen.
- Pinch Points** - Create areas where the road appears more narrow by reducing shoulder width and planting trees closer to the road while still staying out of the clear zone.
- Rumble Strips** - Use rumble strips to give drivers an audible warning to slow down.
- Separated Pedestrian Path** - Locate on the north side of the road. A separated path would provide a safer way for people to walk and jog along the road.
- Traffic Islands** - Install traffic islands at both ends of the village to calm traffic and provide a safer way to turn onto the road.
- Darkened Shoulders** - Darken the shoulders of the road to narrow its look and feel. Can be accomplished with asphalt that has a darker aggregate in the mix than the travel lanes.
- Infill Development** - Build on vacant parcels in the village center to enhance the settled feeling of the place.
- Utilities** - Move utility lines to the north side of the road to reduce competing visual elements.



**3** View (facing east) of bridge over Hay Meadow Branch just before Beetz Road.



Sketch of proposed **"pinch point."** Road narrows and trees are grouped at the bridge to reduce the apparent width of the road. The street trees are paired for greater impact. Utilities lines have been moved to the north (left) side of the road.



**4** Sketch of proposed **traffic islands** to calm traffic and provide a safer method of turning on the National Road.

